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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that investigated the size and composition of the corps of school district administrators in North Carolina. Findings suggest that most North Carolina school districts are staffed traditionally with regard to administration--concentrating on district operation, the instructional program, and federal or state mandated programs. Larger districts require more administrators to conduct more specialized functions. However, North Carolina has fewer school district administrators than the nation as a whole and fewer than half the states. Because of their size, necessary operations, and administrative requirements, districts in North Carolina have many administrative responsibilities. The following strategies to enhance administrative efficiency are offered: (1) recognize and support essential administrative functions and the administrators who perform them; (2) review state educational policies for congruence between educational goals and state support for local administrative positions; (3) consider the implications of state-level policy decisions for personnel as well as for resources; and (4) implement strategies that encourage school districts to develop their own innovative administrative structures. Four tables and one figure are included. The appendix contains four statistical tables. (LMI)

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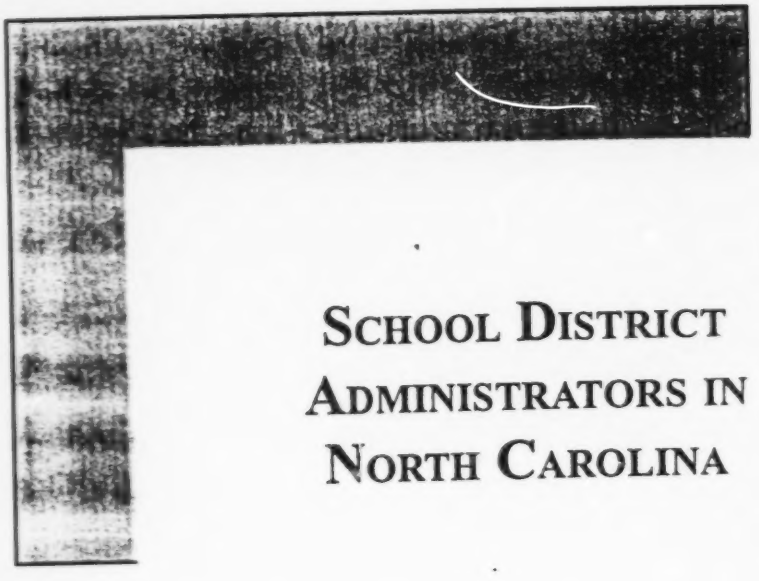

SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS IN NORTH CAROLINA

School of Education
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School District Administrators in North Carolina

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SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS IN NORTH CAROLINA

In the January, 1991 issue of North Carolina Magazine, Steve Tuttle asked, "Aren't there any ways to improve public schools without spending huge chunks of money?" He answered the question by stating, "In the opinion of this layman, ..., there is one possibility that hasn't yet arisen in public debate: Move a lot of our school administrators out from behind their desks and in front of a blackboard." (Tuttle, 1991a, p. 44). Mr. Tuttle went on to cite figures leading to the conclusion that the ratio of teachers to administrators in North Carolina was one to one, and that public school administrators outnumbered the total employees in the university system and community college system combined - more than the total employment in the human resources, prisons and courts combined. Mr. Tuttle did retract these figures in the February issue of the magazine (Tuttle, 1991b), still stating his opinion that the number of school personnel other than teachers was increasing at an alarming rate.

The sense of the comments made by Mr. Tuttle has been heard in North Carolina and across the country. School district administrators and the functions that they perform have been the subject of harsh criticism in light of low achievement test scores and dramatically declining financial resources at the state and local level. North Carolina school district administrators voiced a common reaction to this criticism in a meeting with the members of the State Board of Education. They stated, "The mentality of administrator bashing is demoralizing. Loss of administrative positions does affect the classroom. Why doesn't someone -- once and for all -- tell us if public schools are indeed top heavy! If we are, then do something about it, and if we are not--which we strongly suspect is the case--drop these charges!" (Superintendents' talk with State Board members, 1991, pg. 2)

The State Board of Education, in response to the request of local school superintendents, asked the North Carolina Educational Policy Research Center to investigate the size and composition of school district administrators in North Carolina. The investigation focused on providing answers to the following questions:

1. Who are school district administrators?

2. What factors influence the number and type of administrators that are needed in a school district?

3. What type of school district administrators are there in North Carolina school districts?

4. In comparison with other large organizations and other states, is the number of administrators in North Carolina excessive?

5. What strategies might a state use to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of school district administration?

Since the complaints of critics have concentrated on administrators at the district level, this analysis focuses on central office administrators, and not on school-based principals and assistant principals.

Who are school district administrators?

School district level administrators are individuals working in a district whose responsibility is to supervise and/or manage administrative or programmatic functions of the district as a whole or for groups of schools or students in the district. Central office administrators other than superintendents were added to school districts at the turn of the century and increased rapidly from the 1950s through the 1970s due to increased enrollments, consolidation of school districts, the implementation of federal education programs, and changing and expanding expectations for schools by the public (Gorton, Schneider, & Fisher, 1988).

School district central offices usually house four kinds of personnel:

1. Administrators with managerial and supervisory responsibility for broad district-wide functions.

These individuals are usually responsible for one or more major administrative functions in the district and supervise one or more persons. An example might be an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction who supervises elementary, middle school, and secondary school supervisors and is responsible for the instructional program of the district as a whole.

2. Administrators and supervisors with responsibilities for specific district-wide programs,but with limited personnel supervision responsibility.

An example is the Chapter 1 supervisor who is responsible for working with all of the schools in the district that have Chapter 1 programs.

3. Professional personnel who provide direct instruction or support services for students, teachers, or other school staff across the district.

These are individuals who are housed in the central office but who serve students and teachers directly and have no administrative responsibilities for the district. Included in this group might be psychologists, guidance counselors, or related services personnel.

4. Support staff such as clerical personnel, receptionists, and maintenance staff.

Administrators for the purpose of this report are those central office personnel defined in the first two categories: i.e., those with administrative responsibilities for broad district-wide functions and those responsible for specific programs within a district.

What factors influence the number and type of administrators needed in a school district?

The number and type of administrators in school districts are most heavily influenced by:

1. The management functions common to the operation of large organizations.
2. Local variables, such as size, demographics, locally defined goals and priorities, and the organizational structure of the district.
3. Federal, regional, state laws, standards, and administrative codes.
4. Externally mandated and/or funded program initiatives.

Essential Management Functions

A school system is a big business. The annual current expense budgets of North Carolina school systems range from approximately $4,000,000 to over $350,000,000. The smallest system employs more than 100 persons; the largest, nearly 9,000. Because they are big businesses, school systems need to carry out most of the same management functions as other large organizations. To define these functions, we consulted the literature on business and education, interviewed school superintendents, and analyzed the job titles of North Carolina administrators. Table 1 lists our findings. The essential functions we list for business were taken from the *American Management Association Handbook*, (Fallen, 1983).

There are a number of administrative functions that are common to business and education.

General Management and Leadership concerns the overall management of the entire organization, including reporting to and implementing the decisions of the governing board, setting objectives, organizing the administrative staff, planning, and monitoring the performance of the organization. In business, the person responsible for all this is the chief executive officer; in school systems, the superintendent. Superintendents are also responsible for implementing a number of federal and state laws and regulations.

TABLE 1
Management Functions in Business and Education

Functions Found in Both Business and Education	Functions Unique to Business	Functions Unique to Education
General Leadership and Management	Manufacturing	Curriculum and Instruction
Finance	Marketing	Food Services
Human Resource Development/Personnel	Packaging	Exceptional Children
Purchasing, Warehousing, and Distribution		Federal Programs
Research and Development		Student Services
General and Administrative Services		Student Transportation
Information Systems and Technology		Vocational Education
Plant Operations		
Risk and Insurance Management		
Public Relations		

Finance includes budgeting, budget monitoring, payroll, accounting, and auditing. In school systems, risk and insurance management normally falls within this area.

Human Resource Development/Personnel is found in both business and education. In business, this function is more often referred to as "human resource development;" in education, as "personnel." This area includes recruitment and hiring, performance appraisal, and assuring compliance with relevant federal and state laws. In business, this area includes a heavy emphasis on training and development. In education, planning and implementation of staff development more frequently comes under curriculum and instruction because the function has

historically been provided for instructional staff and not other staff in the school system. In education, the personnel function also covers monitoring the certification status of professional personnel.

Purchasing, Warehousing, and Distribution includes determining what supplies, materials, and equipment are needed, obtaining them, storing them, and distributing them as needed. In business, this function also includes storing finished products prior to shipment.

Research and Development focuses on product development in business. In education, this function normally includes required analytical functions such as projecting student enrollment, analyzing test scores, preparing reports for external funding agencies, and gathering information for the superintendent or school board. A research and development focus on improved organizational performance is rare in education, occurring most often in larger school systems.

General and Administrative Services include functions such as records management and copying, duplicating, and printing. In education, it often also includes student accounting and assignment.

Information Systems and Technology is a more advanced concept in business than in education. It includes recording and storing accurate and relevant data on performance and personnel and providing procedures for retrieval, summarization, and analysis of data. In education, this function focuses on tracking data on student achievement, personnel, and finance.

Plant Operations includes maintenance, energy usage, and compliance with emerging environmental laws and regulations.

Risk and Insurance Management focuses on reducing potential losses due to risks such as fire, theft, or vandalism.

Public Relations includes increasing public understanding of the organization, generating good publicity for the organization and dealing with potential public relations issues requiring management attention.

Table 1 also includes three functions unique to business: *manufacturing*, *marketing*, and *packaging*. As the core function of a manufacturing business, the manufacturing function might be thought of as comparable to the curriculum and instruction function in education. The marketing and packaging functions are not formally found in education. Two other functions not listed separately by the AMA are emerging as major functions in business - *customer satisfaction* and *quality assurance*. These also are not formally found in education although increased community participation in the operation of schools is being encouraged and demands for increased quality in education are beginning to create new activities which must receive administrative attention.

In the final column of Table 1, functions are listed that are unique to education.

Food Services/Child Nutrition includes purchasing supplies and equipment for a breakfast and lunch program for students, hiring and supervising personnel, distributing food supplies to all school cafeterias, and complying with federal laws and regulations.

Student Transportation focuses on getting students to and from school. This function includes planning and monitoring bus routes, hiring and supervising drivers, and bus maintenance.

Curriculum and Instruction includes curriculum development, assistance to teachers in using more effective instructional techniques, planning and implementation of staff development programs, and supervision of media, testing, extra-curricular activities, and textbook selection, procurement, storage, and distribution.

Vocational Education includes preparing the annual vocational education plan, monitoring the budget, and developing new programs and modifying existing ones.

Federal Programs usually include the programs receiving federal funding other than those for exceptional children, vocational education and operational programs such as food services. Responsibilities in this area include the administration of Chapter 1 and other programs serving disadvantaged or at-risk students. It would also include programs for special populations found in some but not all school systems such as migrant or Indian education. In addition to programs for special student populations, this area might include other federal programs such as the innovative program development grants funded through Chapter 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Student Services generally covers guidance, psychological and social work services, drop-out prevention, and, more recently, preschool child care, and before- and after-school programs.

Exceptional Children's Programs focus on serving students identified as handicapped or gifted within specific federal and state statutes, regulations, and case law.

This list, which only describes the essential areas in which school districts commonly have responsibilities, contains 17 distinct areas in which administrative and managerial functions are needed. In smaller districts, multiple functions may be performed by one individual. In larger districts, staffs are required to serve a single function area. But in considering the necessary size of a school district administrative staff, these functions must be covered to maintain basic operations. Even in restructured districts emphasizing site-based management, it is likely that a responsibility for coordinating these functions is still required at the district level.

Local School District Factors

The boundaries of school districts are usually the same as local governments, i.e., communities and counties. School districts reflect their setting in terms of size, demographics, and goals for education. These factors affect the school district as an organization and its administrative requirements.

Size of the School System. The size of the school system's administrative staff varies with the size of the school system. The more students, the more schools, the more district level administrators. For example, Tyrrell County, the smallest school district in the state serving less than 800 students, has two schools -- an elementary school and a middle school. As a consequence, Tyrrell County does not need a coordinator of secondary education or someone other than the superintendent to evaluate the performance of principals. Charlotte-Mecklenberg, on the other hand, has almost 80,000 students attending 110 schools. This district needs multiple personnel at the central office, other than the superintendent, to cover precisely the functions filled by the chief school administrator in Tyrrell, as well as administrators for programs such as secondary education, not found in smaller districts. (See Table 2) Size, in fact, is the biggest factor in the number of administrators needed by a school district.

Table 2

Characteristics of North Carolina School Districts by Size*

	Enrollment		Total Personnel		Number of Schools		Total Budget		Administrators	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
VERY SMALL (n = 8)	778	1,355	103	182	2	4	$ 3,582,917	$ 5,875,856	6	12
SMALL TO AVERAGE (n = 76)	1,613	6,601	189	783	4	15	6,800,407	28,359,551	8	26
AVERAGE TO LARGE (n = 23)	6,749	10,969	736	1,212	11	24	25,134,452	41,778,503	13	28
LARGE (n = 22)	12,012	24,668	1,211	3,078	18	44	41,576,703	108,582,490	19	61
VERY LARGE (n = 5)	31,092	79,145	3,491	8,791	54	110	107,324,227	339,829,350	41	81

* Data from *North Carolina Public Schools:1991 Statistical Profile* (1990).

Demographics. The nature of the population served by the schools plays a role in determining the administrators needed. For example, a community with many economically disadvantaged students might need a Chapter 1 director and a drop-out prevention director. Other communities in North Carolina need a director of Indian education to coordinate programs for this population.

Local Goals. The goals a school system sets and the strategies it devises to meet those goals can affect the number and kind of administrators it needs. A community that decides to implement a widespread magnet program might choose to hire a director of magnet schools to oversee the planning and implementation of such an effort. Some communities hire an individual to write grant proposals, hoping that such an action will bring in enough money to fund specific school improvement efforts.

Local Organizational Structures. The way that an organization chooses to structure itself also plays a role in the number of administrators needed. School district organizational structures in this country have evolved from a community board-run structure to a centralized, bureaucratic structure as districts consolidated and became larger, as more programs and administrative requirements were added, and as communities sought to assure equity across all schools. As we moved from individual schools as the unit of governance to school districts as the unit of governance, administrative functions moved to the district level also. Many functions are logically centralized such as school construction and renovation, general district policy development, and articulation with senior governments. Others are centralized for efficiency such as payroll, and purchasing. Many federal and state funded programs have been centralized because of legal and reporting requirements accompanying the funds. Still others are centralized because of local preference or historical precedents. School districts have approached centralization in many common ways, but in each community there has also been individual choice. This factor also accounts for differences among the number of administrators in districts.

Perhaps the greatest influence on the structure of school districts across the country in recent years has been the restructuring movement. School districts that are moving to site-based management will undoubtedly experience shifts in the number and type of administrators found in their central offices. This does not necessarily mean, that there will be fewer administrators. It does mean that the structure of the central school district administration will change. One would expect fewer central office administrators and more administrative functions being handled at the school level.

Federal and State Laws, Standards, and Administrative Codes

An extensive number of administrative tasks undertaken in school districts are required by the state or federal government, or accrediting programs These include specific administrative requirements in areas such as policy development, local boards of education, community relations, reporting, length of school year and day, curriculum, facilities, environmental areas such as waste water treatment, etc. For example, district-level administrators in North Carolina must ensure that all children in the district received instruction on school bus safety during the first week of school. They must also provide information for the state's Universal Reporting System (URS) for their finances, the Student Information Management System (SIMS), and the Transportation Information Management System (TIMS). Rather than decrease the number of mandates on local school systems over time, federal and state authorities have tended to increase the number, thereby increasing the administrative requirements of school districts.

Externally Mandated and/or Funded Program Initiatives

In addition to specific operational tasks required by external agencies, school districts across the state are required to implement specific programs by the federal and state government. Examples include federal initiatives such as Chapter 1, exceptional children's programs, and vocational education, and state initiatives such as the Basic Education Program, community schools, health education, and Senate Bill 2. These programs bring with them administrative responsibilities and requirements.

Many school districts also seek or take advantage of externally funded programs that are available on a competitive basis to support efforts to meet local needs. Examples include Effective Schools grants, grants to develop pilot programs for outcomes-based education, and the model schools supported by the President's America 2000. These programs are not required of districts, but when obtained, bring with them administrative responsibilities.

What Type of Administrators are Found in North Carolina School Districts?

An analysis of the administrative positions in North Carolina school districts in 1990-91 showed that the only position that all school districts in the state had in common was that of the district's superintendent (See Appendix A for the data). Further inspection shows that most North Carolina school districts have administrators whose primary function is the supervision of the operations of the district (i.e., finance, transportation, food services and maintenance), the supervision of curriculum and instruction, and the supervision and administration of federal and

state program initiatives (i.e. community schools, vocational education, exceptional children). (See Table 3).

Few districts have administrators for two areas considered essential by business--research and evaluation and staff development. Few districts (21%) have administrators responsible for the academic curriculum areas of science, mathematics, communication skills, and social studies while 54% of the districts have administrators for enhancement curriculum areas (i.e., arts, computers, health and physical education, and second language). Finally, fewer school districts in North Carolina have administrators responsible for specific student services such as health and social services than have administrators in specific areas in the other three major functional areas.

TABLE 3

COMMON AND UNCOMMON ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Positions Found in 75% or More of North Carolina School Districts	Positions Found in 25% or Fewer of North Carolina School Districts
General Administration and Management	
Superintendent	Pupil Accounting/Assignment
Finance	
Public Relations (Community Schools)	Research and Evaluation
Auxiliary Services	
Transportation	Supervision of Auxiliary Services
Food Services	
Maintenance	
Curriculum and Instruction	
Supervision of Curriculum & Instruction	Academic Areas
Vocational Education	Substance Abuse Prevention
	Staff Development
Student Services	
Exceptional Children	Health Services
	Guidance
	Social Services

Major differences in the number and type of administrators among school districts may be seen when the size of the school district is taken into account.

Very small districts (778 - 1,355 students)

Most of the administrators in the smallest school districts in North Carolina have formal responsibilities for general administration of the district or basic school district operations such as finance, food services, and maintenance. Most districts also have an administrator for the state-sponsored community schools program. Only half of the smallest districts have administrators for curriculum and instruction and the special areas of vocational education and federal programs. Administrators in student services do not exist except for those for the exceptional children's program in four of the districts . Since the largest of these districts has only four schools, it may be that curriculum and instruction and student services administration functions are performed at the school level.

Administrators performing administrative functions and operational functions such as food services have these as full time responsibilities. Those administrators with specific responsibilities for curriculum and instructional areas and exceptional children have responsibilities for more than one specific functional area.

Small to average size districts (1,613 - 6,601 students)

Seventy-six of the 134 school districts in North Carolina included in this study fall into the small to average size. In addition to the general administrators and administrators for district operations found in the smallest districts, most of these districts have one or more administrators for curriculum and instruction. While the percentages are low, a number of districts also have administrators, primarily with shared responsibilities, for more specific areas such as personnel, transportation, enhancement curriculum subjects, and student health and psychological services.

Average to large size districts (6,749 - 10, 969 students)

School districts of this size and larger have administrators designated specifically for most of the essential managerial functions needed to operate a large organization and those functions listed in Table 1 that are unique to education. General administration and management administrators include the superintendent, assistant or associate superintendents, and administrators responsible for finance, personnel, and public relations -- again primarily the community school programs.

Over half of the districts also have administrators responsible for information systems. Auxiliary services administrators include those for transportation, food services, and maintenance. There are an average of three administrators in districts of this size who are

responsible for curriculum and instruction in general, joined by administrators for vocational education and federal programs. Over half of the districts have full-time administrators responsible for specific enhancement curricular areas as well as a part-time administrator for the media program. Districts of this size and larger have administrators responsible for student services as a whole as well as those for program for exceptional children.

Large Districts (12,012 - 24,668 students)

Large districts have administrators in the same categories as do the average to large-size districts. They also have more of them. Most districts of this size have at least two administrators for general administration and management, finance, personnel, curriculum and instruction, and exceptional children.

There are more administrators with specialized responsibilities than in smaller districts. Approximately half of the districts have administrators responsible for information systems, academic, enhancement and other curricular areas such as driver's education and extracurricular activities, and testing. More districts also have administrators whose shared responsibilities include research and evaluation, substance abuse prevention, staff development, social services and drop-out prevention.

Very large districts (31,092 - 79,145 students)

The five largest districts in the state have the greatest number of administrators for individual functions and the greatest degree of specialization in administrative responsibilities. There are over four administrators for general administration and management, finance and personnel and over seven administrators for general areas in curriculum and instruction. With the exception of specific areas within student services, excluding exceptional children, many of the specific functional areas have more than one administrator.

All of these districts have administrators responsible for general administration and management, finance, personnel, public relations, transportation, food services, maintenance, general administration of curriculum and instruction, vocational education, federal programs, media, staff development, and general administration of student services. Unlike smaller districts, most districts this size have an administrator responsible for all of the auxiliary services as well as those for specific areas such as maintenance. Most also have administrators for pupil accounting and assignment, for other auxiliary areas such as textbooks and instruction, and drop out prevention.

Surprisingly, fewer districts of this size have administrators whose titles suggest responsibility for the specific student services of health, psychological services or social services than smaller districts. None of these districts, in fact, have an administrator specifically for

health services. Overall, however, the largest districts have more administrators for student services than do smaller districts, with most being responsible for the general administration of student services and the program for exceptional children.

An Illustration of School District Administrators in North Carolina

To further describe the number and type of school district administrators in North Carolina, we conducted a study of an average size school district. For purposes of confidentiality we have named this district Pine Tree County.

The Pine Tree County school system resembles other North Carolina school districts which serve between 6,000 and 10,000 students. The district employs approximately 880 persons and has an annual current expense budget of about $30,000,000. The 1990-91 North Carolina Report Card found that the Pine Tree schools had an average level of advantagement and average level of achievement. Pine Tree is a predominantly rural community, with one medium-sized town which serves as a shopping hub and several smaller towns. The district includes 13 schools: one high school, two junior high schools, and ten elementary schools.

The Pine Tree County school district has 17 central office administrators and 25 school level administrators. This puts Pine Tree's ratio of employees to administrators at 19.9 to 1, which is almost exactly the average ratio in North Carolina. Pine Tree's 17 central office administrators include ten who are paid with state funds, five with local funds, one with federal funds, and one with a combination of state and local funds. (See Table 4)

General administration and management of the Pine Tree County school district includes administrators for essential managerial functions and state program initiatives. The superintendent and finance officer, who perform essential functions, are supported by state funds while the director of personnel, who also performs an essential managerial function, is supported with local funds. The community schools/public relations coordinator's position is supported through the state's community school program. The administrative assistant, a locally supported position, supports the superintendent in being responsible for school district relations with the community and other agencies such as SDPI and DHR. The assistant produces the school calendar and Handbook and serves as a hearing officer for appeals involving school discipline cases.

The assistant superintendent for auxiliary services, who is supported by state funds, is responsible for school instruction, renovation, maintenance, transportation and food /services. This assistant superintendent supervises a facilities director who is paid locally and two state paid administrators: the school food services director and the transportation director. The facilities director also oversees the maintenance supervisor, who is paid with state funds.

Table 4

Pine Tree County School District Administrators

General Administration and Management

Superintendent (S)
Finance Officer (S)
Director of Personnel (L)
Administrative Assistant (L)
Community Schools/Public Relations Coordinator (S)

Auxiliary Services

Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services (S)
Facilities Director (L)
Maintenance Supervisor (S)
Transportation Director (S)
School Food Service Director (S)

Curriculum and Instruction

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction (L)
Instructional Director K-8 (S)
Director of Vocational Education (F,S)
Director of Chapter 1 (F)

Student Services

Director of Student Services (S, L)
Exceptional Children (S)

S=State Funding
L=Local Funding
F=Federal Funding

Pine Tree County employs an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction with local funds. This administrator is responsible for all instructional and curriculum services for the district, textbook selection, computer services, school media, school improvement plans and other requirements of Senate Bill 2, testing, accreditation, The Student Information Management System, staff development and all of the state and federally mandated and funded programs such as Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, vocational education, and a migrant program. This individual supervises one federally paid administrator, the Chapter 1 director, two state paid administrators, and one locally paid administrator. The state paid managers are the directors of K-8 instruction and the director of vocational education. The locally paid manager is the director of technology and research and development. This individual coordinates the school system's efforts to introduce computers into the curriculum and administers the state's testing program in Pine Tree County.

The director of student services is paid partially with state funds, partially with local funds. This administrator is responsible for the program for exceptional children, the district's program for school health and alcohol and drug defense, the multidisiplinary diagnostic center, liaison with other agencies regarding student services, and the more traditional guidance, psychological health and social services provided for students. This individual supervises the exceptional children's programs supervisor, who is paid with state funds, and the school system's psychologist , social worker, attendance counselor, and remediation specialist.

All the administrators employed in the Pine Tree County central office are doing essential tasks, tasks which fall within the listing contained in Table 1. Some of the essential management tasks listed there, however, are being done only on the surface, and at least one, centralized purchasing, is not being done at all. The superintendent would like to implement centralized purchasing and receiving and understands the fiscal wisdom of such a measure, but does not have the staff to do it. The research and development being done is not research for program or instructional improvement. It is, instead, the activities necessary to meet state requirements for Senate Bill 2, accreditation, and testing. The superintendent noted that Pine Tree is not staffed sufficiently to allow for the systematic tracking and analysis of test score trends that would be very helpful in efforts to improve instruction. The Superintendent also stated the need for a function not identified in other analyses -- that of an attorney to advise and legally handle the events and issues that occur in the school district related to state and federal laws (e.g. student discipline, services for exceptional children, environmental management, etc.)

The superintendent stated that he needed all of the people now working in the central office simply to operate the school system at a "bare bones" level. There is no real leeway to redeploy individuals for planning or implementing special projects aimed at developing new, more effective procedures. Further, to achieve this level of administrative staffing, five of the

17 administrators including the key positions of Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, and Instruction, the Director of Personnel, and the Facilities Director, are supported by local funds.

How Does the Number of Administrators in North Carolina Compare with Other Organizations and Other States?

The Educational Research Service (ERS), a national organization that provides research information regarding education, compared the number of persons employed per executive, administrator, or manager for 10 major industries and service areas. Using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, ERS found that education had fewer administrators than the other 9 areas -- one for every 14 employees (Robinson, 1988). North Carolina has even fewer administrators than the national education average: an average of one for ever 20 employees. (See Figure 1)

When the focus is exclusively on education and comparisons are made across all states, North Carolina again has fewer school district administrators than are found in may states. In rankings of all states, North Carolina ranked 24th in the ratio of administrators to teachers (State Policy Research, Inc., 1990).

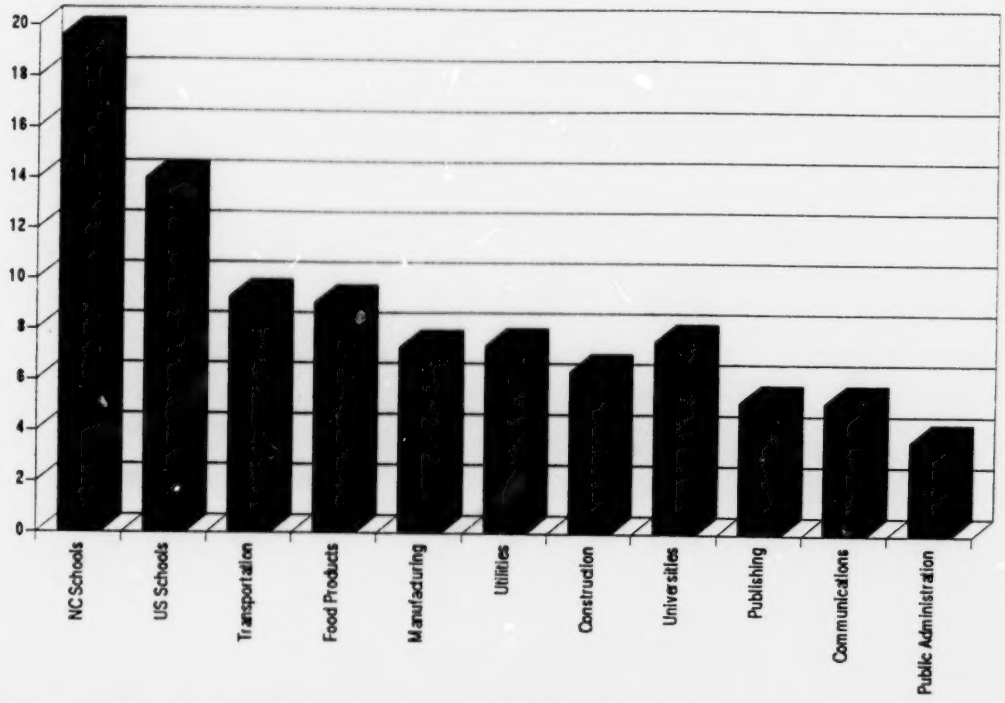

Figure 1. Number of Employees per Administrator by Industry

Summary

This study produced findings that are useful in providing an understanding of the number and kind of administrators in North Carolina school districts.

1. The number and kind of administrators in a school district result from a complex set of factors including essential management functions for all large organizations, local variables (especially size), and externally mandated and/or funded requirements and program initiatives.

2. Most North Carolina school districts are staffed traditionally with regard to administration, concentrating on the operation of the district, the instructional program, and programs required by the state and federal government. Few districts have administrators who are specifically designated for renewal activities such as research and development or staff development.

3. As school districts grow larger, there is a change from administrators with broad and multiple responsibilities to administrators with more specialized responsibilities. The number of administrators required for a given administrative function increases by size of district.

4. Smaller school districts in the state appear to be minimally staffed to accomplish the administrative tasks required and inadequately staffed to undertake major new initiatives.

5. Public schools have fewer administrators than many large organizations. North Carolina has fewer school district administrators than the nation as a whole and fewer than half of the states.

Such findings suggest that Mr. Tuttle's recommendation to send school district administrators to classrooms is, unfortunately, more inflammatory than useful. Just to function, without regard for the mission of school districts or the way in which they operate, districts must have responsible administrators to gather, distribute, and monitor funds, hire personnel, and build, operate, and maintain buildings. Because school systems transport children and feed them, there must be persons with the managerial responsibilities of operating a bus system and providing food services capable of providing breakfast and lunch for the district's students. These are functions that are essential to open the doors of schools and keep them open.

In certain areas, school districts do not have control over administrative positions. A number of school district functions requiring administrators are mandated by either state or federal law. The extensive and necessary programs mandated for students who are handicapped require administration as does the vocational education program; so do the more recently

mandated programs requiring compliance with new and complex environmental laws and regulations.

School districts exist within and are themselves bureaucracies requiring administrators to manage the rules, regulations, record keeping, and paperwork indigenous to the bureaucracies. The same federal and state governments that might decry excess paperwork also require extensive paperwork and reporting by local school systems.

In other words, because of their size, the operations they must perform, and the administrative requirements placed on them by the state and federal governments, school districts in North Carolina have many administrative responsibilities.

What strategies might the state use to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of school district administrators?

School districts, like other large organizations, can become "top heavy" resulting in excessively expensive superstructures that distance many of the district's efforts from students and their most pressing needs as was illustrated in a recent study of the New York public schools (Weschsler, 1990). There are several ways that the state might work with local districts to minimize the chances that excessive administrative structures will develop and thrive.

1. **Recognize and support essential administrative functions and the administrators who perform them.**

We believe that Mr. Tuttle, speaking for a group representing business and industry, was not speaking of essential managerial functions such as finance, personnel, or district-wide leadership when he suggested that administrators be sent back to the classroom. The criticism, however, stated in the way that it was, suggests that there is not a recognition of the administrative requirements of North Carolina school districts.

School districts are "big business" in some cases, the biggest business in the community or county. School districts, as stewards of public responsibility and resources, need personnel to ensure that they are led and managed both efficiently and effectively. As school districts in North Carolina become larger and more complex through growth and merger, there will be needs for more administrators and specialized skills to handle growth and accomplish merger successfully. Superintendents in the state have told the State Board that the unsubstantiated criticisms they are receiving are damaging to morale. At a time when the best efforts of all involved are needed, the state should discourage comments and actions that have the potential for harm and find ways of being supportive of the administrators who are performing essential managerial functions and the functions mandated by the state. Concurrently, the state could

support efforts by school districts to examine and improve their administrative structures so that they are functioning both effectively and efficiently.

2. **Review state educational policies to be certain that state educational goals and state support for local administrative positions are congruent.**

There is much rhetoric in the state about improving student performance. Yet when one looks at the administrators supported with state funds, a difference message is given. State funds supporting administrators are targeted to basic school district operations such as finance and to special program initiatives such as community schools or health education. Approximately 21% of the districts in North Carolina have district-level administrators whose primary focus is on basic academic subjects such as communication skills, mathematics, and science. The state supports more district level administrative personnel in the areas of art, computer education, health education, and vocational education than in academic areas. State goals and state support in this instance, may not be congruent.

3. **Consider implications for personnel as well as for resources in state-level policy decisions.**

It is not uncommon to receive estimates of the fiscal costs of proposed policies, but seldom are estimates of the impact on personnel provided in policy proposals. Some policies and programs require administrative leadership while others do not. Failure to analyze policies for administrative needs may result in the addition of administrators for programs that do not require a full time position or the addition of overwhelming administrative tasks with no or limited support. Careful analyses of the personnel requirements of proposed policies would assist both the state and local school districts in providing appropriate levels of administrative personnel for state-required policies and programs.

4. **Implement strategies that encourage school districts to go beyond traditional administrative functions to actively addressing the educational needs of their particular communities.**

The case study and analysis of administrative positions illustrated a heavy emphasis in North Carolina school districts on school district operations and the administration of programs mandated or funded by the state or federal government. Smaller districts, the predominant size of school districts in North Carolina, had very few administrators whose function was primarily curriculum and instruction. Few districts in the state, regardless of size, had staff whose titles suggested the functions of needs sensing, planning, staff development or other kinds of renewal and improvement that directly addressed local needs.

North Carolina has, however, begun to encourage districts to go beyond tradition by requiring them to develop individual improvement plans. The state might also encourage districts to consider the leadership and/or administrative structures that would best support the success of these plans.

Business supports needed change and improvement through the functions of marketing, research and development, and more recently, through employee-driven organizational structures. These are functions and organizational strategies that are not common in education. Strategies that would provide support for these kinds of activities could provide the impetus needed to infuse these functions into school districts and lead to the improvements that all are seeking.

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Appendix A

Appendix A: Number, Percentage and Mean Number of Administrators by School District Size

(From: *1990-1991 North Carolina Education Directory*)

	Very Small	Small to Aver.	Aver.-Large	Large	Very Large	TOTAL
General Administration and Management	8[a]	76	23	22	5	134
	100%[b]	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	4.38[c]	5.07	6.14	10.08	19.40	
Overall Supervision	8	76	23	22	5	134
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2.38	2.18	2.09	3.05	5.00	
Finance	8	75	23	22	5	133
	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	99%
	1.06	1.03	1.35	2.14	4.50	
Personnel	2	46	21	21	5	95
	25%	61%	91%	95%	100%	71%
	0.19	0.66	0.89	1.86	4.50	
Public Relations[d]	7	65	21	21	5	119
	88%	86%	91%	95%	100%	89%
	0.75	0.89	1.13	1.57	2.60	
Information Systems	0	19	13	13	3	48
	0%	25%	57%	59%	60%	36%
	0.00	0.24	0.50	0.91	1.10	
Pupil Account./Assignmt.	0	5	4	4	4	17
	0%	7%	17%	18%	80%	13%
	0.00	0.04	0.09	0.16	1.10	
Research & Evaluation	0	5	4	10	3	22
	0%	7%	17%	45%	60%	16%
	0.00	0.03	0.09	0.39	1.30	

[a] Number of school districts with administrators in this category

[b] Percentage of school districts with administrators in this category

[c] Mean number of administrators in this category per school district

[d] Includes Community School Coordinators

Appendix A (Continued): Number, Percentage and Mean Number of Administrators by School District Size

(From: *1990-1991 North Carolina Education Directory*)

		Very Small	Small to Aver.	Aver.-Large	Large	Very Large	TOTAL
Auxillary Services		8	76	23	22	5	134
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
		2.50	2.76	3.47	4.64	7.20	
	Overall Supervision	0	3	4	5	4	16
		0%	4%	17%	23%	80%	12%
		0.00	0.03	0.17	0.20	0.80	
	Transportation	5	54	21	22	5	107
		63%	71%	91%	100%	100%	80%
		0.63	0.72	0.95	1.11	1.00	
	Food Services	7	74	23	21	5	130
		88%	97%	100%	95%	100%	97%
		0.88	1.00	1.17	1.59	2.30	
	Maintenance	8	70	23	21	5	127
		100%	92%	100%	95%	100%	95%
		1.00	0.94	1.04	1.41	2.30	
	Other (Bks., safety, etc.)	0	6	3	7	4	20
		0%	8%	13%	32%	80%	15%
		0.00	0.07	0.13	0.32	1.90	

Appendix A (Continued): Number, Percentage and Mean Number of Administrators by School District Size

(From: *1990-1991 North Carolina Education Directory*)

	Very Small	Small to Aver.	Aver.-Large	Large	Very Large	TOTAL
Curriculum and Instruction	5	75	23	22	5	130
	63%	99%	100%	100%	100%	97%
	1.31	4.08	7.64	12.22	25.00	
Overall Supervision	4	71	23	22	5	125
	50%	93%	100%	100%	100%	93%
	0.44	1.52	2.71	4.28	7.50	
Academic Areas[e]	0	8	6	11	3	28
	0%	11%	26%	50%	60%	21%
	0.00	0.08	0.35	1.23	2.20	
Enhancement Areas[f]	0	38	15	15	4	72
	0%	50%	65%	68%	80%	54%
	0.00	0.55	1.10	1.45	3.50	
Vocational Ed.	4	69	22	20	5	120
	50%	91%	96%	91%	100%	90%
	0.38	0.83	0.98	1.45	2.60	
Substance Abuse	0	5	2	8	3	18
	0%	7%	9%	36%	60%	13%
	0.00	0.07	0.09	0.36	0.60	
Federal Programs	5	45	19	19	5	93
	63%	59%	83%	86%	100%	69%
	0.38	0.51	0.86	1.13	2.40	
Other Content Areas[g]	0	12	8	12	4	36
	0%	16%	35%	55%	80%	27%
	0.00	0.16	0.39	0.47	1.60	
Testing	0	11	9	15	4	39
	0%	14%	39%	68%	80%	29%
	0.00	0.07	0.24	0.46	0.80	
Media	0	18	13	18	5	54
	0%	24%	57%	82%	100%	40%
	0.00	0.20	0.65	1.00	1.80	
Staff Development	1	9	9	10	5	34
	13%	12%	39%	45%	100%	25%
	0.13	0.08	0.27	0.38	2.00	

[e] Includes communication skills, math, science, social studies personnel at the district level

[f] Includes arts, computers, health and physical education and secondary language personnel at the district level

[g] Includes drivers education, minority achievement, extended day and extra curricular personnel at the district level

Appendix A (Continued): Number, Percentage and Mean Number of Administrators by School District Size

(From: *1990-1991 North Carolina Education Directory*)

		Very Small	Small to Aver.	Aver.-Large	Large	Very Large	TOTAL
Student Services		4	74	22	22	5	127
		50%	97%	96%	100%	100%	95%
		0.69	2.54	3.75	5.98	6.80	
	Overall Supervision	0	48	20	18	5	91
		0%	63%	87%	82%	100%	68%
		0.00	0.68	1.22	1.65	2.20	
	Health Services	0	14	3	3	0	20
		0%	18%	13%	14%	0%	15%
		0.00	1.94	0.50	0.44	0.00	
	Psychological Services	0	26	10	10	2	48
		0%	34%	43%	45%	40%	36%
		0.00	0.43	1.02	1.27	0.40	
	Guidance	1	4	3	4	2	14
		13%	5%	13%	18%	40%	10%
		0.25	0.02	0.11	0.14	0.50	
	Exceptional Children	4	65	21	22	4	116
		50%	86%	91%	100%	80%	87%
		0.44	0.82	0.86	1.77	2.80	
	Social Services	0	18	4	10	1	33
		0%	24%	17%	45%	20%	25%
		0.00	0.28	0.17	0.57	0.20	
	Other (dropout, etc.)	0	8	6	10	4	28
		0%	11%	26%	45%	80%	21%
		0.00	0.10	0.20	0.43	0.70	

Introducing the Center

The North Carolina Educational Policy Research Center was established in 1991 through a contract to the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from the State Board of Education. The mission of the Center is to strengthen the information base for educational policy decisions in North Carolina to enhance outcomes of schooling for children. The Center seeks to accomplish this mission by:

- conducting policy research and analyses;
- preparing research reports examining broad policy issues, policy briefs providing concise information about specific issues, and quarterly newsletters;
- disseminating research-based information on educational policy issues to North Carolina policymakers, educators and community leaders;
- providing a forum for the discussion of educational policy issues; and,
- training future educational leaders in the conduct and use of policy research.

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